



ALIENS: COLONIAL MARINES

In space no-one can hear you tapping your watch...

Believe it or not, it's getting on for half a decade since this was announced - ironic given that it was Gearbox who gave sloppy mouth-to-mouth to previous vapourware king *Duke Nukem*.

There's still plenty of space in our hearts for a definitive Xenomorph destroy-fest though, so hope endures - even if the much-touted E3 2010 appearance never materialised. Could it be that the Ridley Scott-directed *Alien* prequels, kicking off in 2011, are being eyed as a possible tie-in release window for this? *Colonial Marines** might be set after *Alien 3* - with our squad of beefcake grunts on a hunt to locate the errant USS Sulaco and figure out the whereabouts of Ripley and co - but the timing would be perfect.

Whenever anybody thinks *Aliens* they think claustrophobic, dingy, ill-lit

NEED TO KNOW

Two years ago *Aliens* games were coming outta the goddamn walls, with Sega announcing *Aliens Vs Predator*, a xenomorph role-player from Obsidian, and this, a shooter from *Brothers in Arms* devs and *Duke Nukem* rescuers, Gearbox. Fast forward to 2011 and *AvP* is a shat distant memory, *Aliens RPG* has been cancelled for eighteen months, and we're still waiting for *Colonial Marines*.



corridors that reek of brooding doom. Surprisingly, though, *Colonial Marines* is hoping to mix up the indie-turding tension with rather more open outdoor encounters - including whacking great city areas. Gearbox are touting their 'Make a Stand' mechanic, which sees our team whipping up ramshackle defences (dispensing bomb-traps and auto-turrets, sealing doors with blowtorches) to repulse acid-blooded ET attacks. *Aliens vs Predator* attempted this to some extent, and they turned out to be among the stronger sections of an otherwise uneven adventure.

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS

Now the bad news: quick time events! Hold on though - if any genre was going to do them justice (and remember how terrifying they were in the otherwise ass *Jericho*?) then it's surely this one. There are also tentative hints that the Xenomorphs' infamous acid blood will

scar and deform the environment, which could potentially work brilliantly if it offered up avenues for on-the-fly escape, or - perish the thought - provided the aliens with fresh routes to scuttle through to get to our tasty human meatbags.

Given the development team's quirky shooter heritage (*Brothers in Arms*, *Borderlands*, *Duke Nukem*), signs suggest this isn't an ordinary FPS - and the four-player drop in, drop out co-op should only heighten the experience. If Gearbox can nail the traditional tension of the *Aliens* universe, the multiplayer could be a contender in amongst a packed world of *CoDs* and *Battlefields*. ■ Rob Taylor

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BYTES...

* Just as we were going to press, Sega's Alan Pritchard said: "We'll be able to tell you a lot about (*Colonial Marines*) in the next couple of months."